

Statement of Cultural Heritage Significance

criterion a the place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history	Gympie Fire Station (former) (constructed 1940, extended 1972) is important in demonstrating the evolution of fire services in regional Queensland. It is evidence of the improvement of fire services through establishing new fire stations and replacing existing ones with purpose-built, permanent (masonry) buildings. The 1940 building and 1972 extensions to the Gympie Fire Station (former), in form, fabric and materials, demonstrate the evolution of accommodation for staff and equipment, technological changes, and the expansion of fire services for its region – a pattern of continued and expanded provision of fire services at existing stations in Queensland. The highly intact Gympie Fire Station (former) is both representative of interwar Queensland fire stations through its amenities and layout; and distinctive in its Functionalist design by noted Brisbane architect Charles Herbert Griffin.
criterion d the place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places	Gympie Fire Station (former) is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of an interwar Queensland fire station. This includes its: • strategic, central location for active observation and rapid response; • robust construction; • civic architectural expression; • operational infrastructure, including communications watch room, watchtower with lookout, drill yard, and large engine bay with wide garage doors opening directly to the street; • ground-floor staff rooms, arranged and detailed to facilitate rapid response to alarms, including communal dormitory and bathroom illustrating the era's male-only staff, kitchen, and recreation room; • board room with separate secondary entrance, illustrating the management and administration of interwar fire services by local boards; • first-floor superintendent's family residence, including lounge, 'breakfast' room, kitchen, bedrooms, bathroom, and verandahs, with direct access to workrooms below, illustrating the close functional relationship between the station and residence; and • laundry and its stair between staff rooms and residence, reflecting the domestic functions and labour arrangements of interwar stations. A good, highly intact example of an interwar Queensland fire station, it retains its layout and spatial relationships with a strong degree of integrity, illustrating the interconnected operational, administrative, residential, and service functions of stations of the period.

criterion e

the place is important
because of its aesthetic
significance

Gympie Fire Station (former) is important for its aesthetic significance as a prominent, architect-designed, highly intact civic building in an interwar Functionalist style. Through the dynamic composition of its geometric building forms, restrained and stylised ornamentation, robust fire-resistant materials, careful detailing, and functional layout, the building possesses beautiful attributes expressive of the speed, efficiency, and modernity of Queensland's interwar fire service. Its street-facing elevations are particularly accomplished architectural compositions. Stepped block forms, expanses of face brick, and horizontal bands of windows are contrasted by a round corner tower accentuated by vertical, stylised decoration.

Standing on a high ridge at a wide street intersection, it is a local landmark within the Gympie townscape and makes a strong contribution to the surrounding streetscape.

History

The Gympie fire station, opened on 24 August 1940, is a two-storey brick building with a four-storey, curved lookout tower. Designed in a distinctive Functionalist style by Brisbane architect, C H (Charles Herbert) Griffin, it stands prominently at the corner of Bligh Street and Nelson Road, the site of Gympie's first fire station (1902, extended 1904). Situated high on the ridge of Caledonian Hill, it is a landmark in Gympie. Designed in 1939 and constructed during the first year of World War II (WWII), the Gympie Fire station is evidence of the Queensland government's support of improved fire services in the interwar period through provision of new or upgraded (to permanent, masonry) fire stations, primarily in regional Queensland.

Gympie history

Established on the traditional lands of the Kabi Kabi People,¹ Gympie (initially called Nashville) developed following the discovery of gold in October 1867 by James Nash. Although small finds of gold had been made in the region – near Imbil, Black Snake Range, and Nanango – it was the discovery of gold at Gympie in a gully near the Mary River that suddenly changed the fortunes of the region and Queensland. The new gold field established Queensland as a significant gold producer, contributing much needed finances to the young colony. By Christmas 1867, the Gympie field had a population of 4000, according to the Gold Commissioner (or over 15,000 according to James Nash). Although the alluvial deposits were quickly exhausted, shallow reef mining started in 1868. A third phase of mining, based on deep reef mining, began from 1875, and marked a new era of wealth and prosperity for Gympie. Gold production peaked in 1903 and Gympie was declared a city in 1905, but by 1927, production at Gympie had almost ceased. However, the rise of fruit growing and dairy farming in the district enabled Gympie to survive the decline of mining, as a service centre for its district.²

As Gympie evolved from a hastily established mining settlement, its form developed a distinctive character shaped by its topography. The makeshift settlement's irregular street pattern, dictated by a series of valleys and ridges was perpetuated when its initial survey in April 1868 accommodated existing buildings and mining homestead leases, rather than imposing the grid pattern common to Queensland town surveys of the time. Due to the continuation of gold production, the early makeshift timber structures of 1860s Gympie gradually gave way to more permanent and substantial masonry buildings.³ Despite this improvement, the threat of fire remained and major fires occurred in Mary Street, the commercial heart of Gympie, in 1881, 1891 and 1929.⁴

Queensland firefighting history

Organised firefighting developed in Queensland from the 1860s. A fire brigade was established in Ipswich around 1865. On the fifth attempt at forming a fire brigade in the colonial capital, Brisbane's City Volunteer Fire Brigade, administered by a Fire Brigade Board, was formed in 1868. Brisbane's first fire station was built in 1869. *The Fire Brigades Act 1876*,⁵ primarily designed for Brisbane, introduced a statutory Fire Brigade Board for the first time. *The Fire Brigades Act 1881*, which applied outside Brisbane also, dictated a new board structure with two representatives from each of: the municipal council, local fire insurance companies, and the Queensland Government. The mayor was the chairman and had the second or casting vote. The *Fire Brigades Act Amendment Act 1902* allowed local authorities to establish their own boards and brigades, and the *Fire Brigades Act 1920* restructured fire brigade boards, increasing their membership from six to seven: two appointed by the Governor in Council, three elected by local insurance companies, and two elected by the local authority. Funding was split between the local government, the state government, and insurance companies in proportion to the number of their members on the board (namely, two sevenths,

two sevenths, and three sevenths respectively). The boards could also subsidise volunteer fire brigades.⁶

Gympie firefighting history and first station

Gympie's early firefighting initiatives commenced in December 1875, when the town's first volunteer fire brigade was established. This primarily operated from the old Gympie Court House (demolished).⁷ The brigade ceased functioning between 1878 and 1882.⁸ A new brigade formed in July 1883, but operated for less than a year.⁹ Despite calls for a fire brigade during the 1880s and 1890s, especially after fires, none formed at this time.¹⁰

The Gympie Fire Brigade Board (the Board) was established in November 1900 and the constitution of the Board's district was published in the *Queensland Government Gazette* on 22 December 1900. The first board meeting was held in 1901.¹¹ The first fire station, a single-storey weatherboard structure, was built in 1902 on a narrow, central site reserved for fire brigade purposes on the corner of Bligh Street and Nelson Road, prominently located high on a ridge of Caledonian Hill, which enabled views across the landscape on all sides, especially to the centre of town, approximately 400 metres to its northwest.¹² The station grounds included a tall timber watchtower to the south, mounted with a large brass bell for an alarm. A second storey was added in 1904, as accommodation for the superintendent and his family.¹³ A taller, steel watchtower with a cabin lookout, was added to the site by 1937.¹⁴

Planning for a new fire station

By 1938, the Board was planning a replacement station building. Initially, the Board sought approval from the state government for a £5000 loan to replace the existing station, but by September 1939, the Board had received permission to borrow £6500 from the State Government Insurance Office.¹⁵ This was a considerable amount of money, with the annual operating cost of Queensland's fire brigades in 1938 equalling £86,800.¹⁶

At its meeting on 15 December 1938, the Board appointed Brisbane-based architect C H Griffin to design its new station building.¹⁷ Griffin (1880-1961) operated a solo practice in Brisbane from 1923 to no later than 1953.¹⁸ He was especially noted for his elite masonry residence designs in Brisbane during the 1930s and undertook prominent projects in Gympie from 1936.¹⁹ In March 1939, the Board discussed the plans for the new building with Griffin, before his design was submitted to the Department of Public Works for approval.²⁰

Gympie Fire Station

By 31 May 1939, the Gympie Fire Station plans for a two-storey brick building with a 40' (12.2m) tall tower had been approved by the Department of Public Works. Tenders for its construction were invited in early June. The estimated cost was £5,600.²¹ The Board had already purchased, for £15, a dismantled timber staircase from the Gympie Town Hall (c1890), which was superfluous to the Griffin-designed extension and revisions to that building.²² The staircase was most likely re-used in the new fire station as part of the main staircase extending from the ground to first floor.²³

Prior to commencement of the brick station building, the existing timber station building was sold for removal and relocated to Stewart Terrace in Gympie.²⁴ A temporary timber station was built to the south of the original station to accommodate on-duty firemen and house one fire engine during construction of the new station. The other engine was housed at the City Motor Garage in Mellor Street.²⁵ This temporary fire station, which later became the brigade's workshop, was removed from the site c1979.²⁶

The *Gympie Truth* newspaper noted that plans for the new station showed a 'substantial building of utilitarian design and pleasing appearance'. It reported that the new fire station would have a 50' (15.2m) frontage to Bligh Street and would extend back along Nelson Street almost the full length of the property. The corner would be circular, 15' by 15' (4.6m by 4.6m), and rising 45' (13.7m) to a watchtower. About 32' (9.8m) of frontage would be for the reel

rooms (appliance bays) which would have a depth of 34'6" (10.5m), and a rear width of 26'6" (8m). A concrete pathway would lead to a rear entrance to these garages. The building would be constructed of brick, with structural steel reinforcement, and roofed with fibro-cement.²⁷

The newspaper report noted that the ground floor of the tower would contain the automatic alarms and an office, while the Nelson Road wing would contain a staff dormitory, bathroom, lavatory, kitchenette, recreation room (billiard room) 24' by 18' (7.3m by 5.5m), and a board room. The existing steel bell tower would be retained. The (pedestrian) entrance vestibule would be on Nelson Road, and the (first floor) living quarters for the Superintendent would have verandahs on the east and west sides.²⁸ The station's layout and amenities were similar to other fire stations built across Queensland during the period.

Gympie Fire Station was designed in an interwar Functionalist architectural style,²⁹ bearing characteristic style features, including: masonry construction with asymmetrical, cubic massing juxtaposed with curved elements; stylised, minimal decoration; steel-framed strip windows with flat cantilevered concrete awnings; and a low-pitched roof concealed behind parapets.³⁰ In November 1939, the Board resolved 'that all Brisbane bricks [manufactured by Brisbane Brick and Builders Supply Company Ltd at Newmarket] be procured and used in the new building in accordance with the specifications'.³¹

Provision of the new Gympie Fire Station was part of a wider, state-wide pattern supported by successive Queensland governments.³² Construction of fire stations in Queensland grew from a handful in the first decade of the 1900s, to 6 (1910s), 10 (1920s), 17 (1930s), 14 (1940s) to about 24 (1950s).³³ Construction of fire stations in regional Queensland, rather than in metropolitan Brisbane, grew from 40% (1920s) to 77% (1930s), 93% (1940s) and 96% (1950s) of all built.³⁴ Of the 27 interwar fire stations known to have been erected in Queensland, 17 are known to survive in 2026.³⁵

Queensland Fire Stations of the Interwar Period

Queensland fire stations of the interwar period varied in size, style, and construction but they shared characteristics. There was no standard fire station design in Queensland, although some plans were reused. Station design evolved gradually in response to technological and legislative change.

After the gradual phase-out from 1905 of horse-drawn firefighting appliances, new stations did not require horse paddocks and stables. Their appliance bays needed to be larger to accommodate motorised appliances, which also required onsite workshop garages and yards to service and maintain them. Motorisation enabled appliances to serve larger districts, reducing the need for smaller branch stations. The *Fire Brigades Act 1920* centralised control of Brisbane fire stations, dissolving individual local boards and amalgamating them under a single Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, which began closing or downsizing smaller stations.³⁶

Stations built prior to 1920 varied considerably in size and accommodation, ranging from small sheds serving a small local area, to large, resource-heavy station complexes.³⁷ After 1920, stations became more consistent in scale and planning, with compact medium-sized stations becoming the prevailing model.³⁸

Many early Queensland fire stations included a watchtower, usually freestanding, from which firefighters monitored the surrounding district for signs of fire. With the early 20th century rise of telecommunications, stations reduced reliance on watchtowers in favour of watch rooms with radios and telephones. However, towers often doubled as hose-drying towers and as training towers, so they continued to be constructed well into the late 20th century.³⁹

While interwar Queensland fire stations were individually designed, they shared common functional and architectural characteristics that differentiate them from stations constructed before and after the interwar period.

They were typically compact, functional buildings, built strategically near the centre of their service area, usually on major thoroughfares that facilitated quick response. Typically, the buildings expressed their important civic function through architectural massing, form, style, and detailing. They were built using robust fire-resistant materials, such as concrete, brick, or cement-sheet walls, with cement sheet or tile roofs. They included at least one large engine bay (also called reel rooms or appliance bays) at the front of the building with wide garage doors to the road. Watchtowers or lookouts were included, and the buildings were sited on high land, if possible, which gave them visual prominence within the urban landscape. They also had a watch room (or duty room) with communication devices (radios, telephones) to receive and send signals, and an alarm system throughout the building. Importantly, the sites also included open yards that were used for drills and for maintaining fire-fighting equipment, such as hoses and engines.

Staff rooms were incorporated into the stations, such as a recreation room, kitchen, and communal men-only ablutions and dormitory, reflective of the male-only staff of the period. These work rooms were typically on the ground floor, although sleeping and recreation rooms could be on the first floor. They also typically included a board room (or committee room) to host their regular board meetings on site.

The stations usually also included a family residence for the officer-in-charge, who was permanently on call. Sometimes these residences were adjacent and freestanding but more frequently they were integrated within station buildings. These were typically on the first floor, providing some privacy from the station operations, but direct access to the workrooms when needed. They included living and bedrooms, breakfast room (informal dining and living room of the period), kitchen, bathroom, toilet, and verandahs. The stations included a laundry for the station's linen and uniforms, as well as the residence's domestic washing. Completed in 1940, Gympie Fire Station incorporated the principal characteristics of interwar fire stations in Queensland.⁴⁰

Although WWII, commenced in September 1939, resulted in building restrictions and shortages of materials, some regional fire station construction proceeded during WWII, including at Gympie.⁴¹ Gympie Fire Station was erected by local contractor David Malcolm Kay, while the Clerk of Works, Percy Samuel James (P J) Coombe (1874-1948), also had a prominent role in the building project. Most of the work was carried out by local labour, and the capital cost was about £6,500.⁴²

Gympie Fire Station was opened 24 August 1940 by the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, Edward Michael (Ned) Hanlon. At this time George Thomas was Chairman of the Fire Brigade Board, and J A (John Agnew) Barns was Secretary.⁴³ Hanlon stated that the station 'was worthy of the city of Gympie and would remain to serve the needs of a city ten times the present size.... [and] anything the present Government undertook...set a high standard for private builders to follow.'⁴⁴ The *Daily Mercury* newspaper reported that 'the policy of the Government was to build well and build truly' and that Hanlon had stated 'to people who thought expensive and up-to-date public buildings were a waste of money, the Government retorted that the most economical way to build was to erect public institutions that would meet the requirements of a city for years'.⁴⁵ This attitude echoed the Queensland Government's public works building programme, initiated in 1932 to counter the effects of the Depression, which resulted in the production of commodious, low-maintenance civic buildings that became long-term assets to the state.⁴⁶

Hanlon also noted that as the war might touch Australian soil, the governments of Australia had decided to co-operate in expenditure of public moneys. By agreement between the States and the Commonwealth, all proposed works were submitted to the Co-ordinator General of Works, Sir Harry Brown, for rating in order of their urgency for service to the civilian population and also for defence needs.⁴⁷ It is thus likely that the Gympie Fire station was approved because it also had a civil defence role. Firefighting was an important aspect of Air Raid Precautions (ARP), and Hanlon noted that there were 171 Air Raid wardens in Gympie.⁴⁸

Characteristic Changes to Fire Stations

Extension of Queensland fire stations for operational reasons (e.g. engine and staff accommodation and technological advances) and alterations for repair and maintenance reasons occurred throughout the interwar and postwar periods. After the lull in construction during WWII, new stations continued their prewar pattern/layout but with engines becoming larger and heavier, the earlier stations usually could not accommodate them. As early as 1949, some interwar stations were considered unable to accommodate the new post-war engines, which required larger, specialised, and preferably drive-through bays, rather than the earlier garage spaces. Consequently, older stations were vacated for new premises, extended, or altered to accommodate them.⁴⁹ Extensions were added to the following fire stations: Toowoomba (1930), Brisbane Metropolitan Headquarters (1935), Rockhampton (1937), Ithaca [QHR601199] (1938), Warwick (1948), Dalby (1953) and Redcliffe [QHR602548] (1973, 1987). Alterations were made to fire stations at: Longreach (1937), Ipswich (1944), Mackay (1952), and Boonah (1953).⁵⁰

Post-war changes to Gympie Fire Station

In the immediate post-war years, repairs and maintenance were the primary focus for the building. On 1 July 1948, the Board called for tenders for the purchase and removal of the watchtower, excluding the bell, as the tower had been unused for several years.⁵¹ By June 1947, construction flaws were causing water damage to the building and discomfort for the Chief Officer and his family. Specifications by architects Goodsir and Carlyle called for many waterproofing interventions, including adding a concrete kerb around the stairwell opening in the lookout's deck, replacing the small enclosure room that covered the opening, and adding timber-framed, tiled hoods over the first-floor windows on the western and southern sides of building. A loan of £2000 for this work was approved in 1948, and it was carried out around 1950. However, by 1955 another loan was required as problems persisted.⁵² In 1957, work on the station building included treating the external walls with a waterproof solution, and cleaning and painting the board room's badly stained walls.

In the 1950s, expansion of the Fire Brigade's reserve (R.489) from 32.5 perches (822m²) to 1 rood and 36.5 perches (1922m²) occurred after acquisition of a vacant allotment to the west of the fire station at the end of 1957 (with gazettal in 1959).⁵³ In this decade, the Gympie Fire Station was staffed by three permanent firemen living in the building and 24-25 volunteers. While the Chief Officer (J F Walters) lived upstairs, the other two permanent firemen shared a bedroom, bathroom with showers, and a kitchenette on the ground level. In 1952, the building's recreational amenities included a billiard room. Direct telephones from the streets were connected with the station, and the alarm system indicated the location of the fire.⁵⁴ The volunteer fire fighters received two compulsory lectures per week on firefighting methods.⁵⁵

During the 1960s, the station's original 'Super Six' roof, which was destroyed by hail in 1964, was replaced with metal roofing.⁵⁶

In February 1971, the Board requested a loan to extend the station and alter its tower. The Board stated that three fire appliances were being kept in a space meant for two, while the station sedan was kept in a timber shed at the rear of the site. Furthermore, the lack of space would be compounded as the Board planned to upgrade their old appliances soon. The Board explained an extension would 'allow the adequate housing of all the Board's vehicles and [would] provide a staff lecture area and Officers' office accommodation that do not exist at present'.⁵⁷ In addition, the tower's open lookout deck was still causing water ingress, and enclosing it would prevent further damage and provide an all-weather lookout.

Completed in 1972 to a design by architects Prangley and Crofts, the lookout deck was enclosed by a glass-walled room, and a large, single-storey brick extension was attached to the western side of the 1940 appliance bay. The station's flagpole and its flanking two concrete window awnings were removed from the tower, likely at this time. A loan for \$25,637 for this

work was approved in October 1971, but costs increased due to extra items including a concrete beam over an old mine drive, vinyl tiles for the lecture room and offices, and refixing the air raid siren to the tower.⁵⁸ By 1974, a single-storey, brick extension accommodating a kitchen was built attached to the rear (south) of the 1940 appliance bay.⁵⁹ In 1979, a large, metal-clad garage/workshop was constructed in the station grounds to the south of the fire station building, replacing the 1939 workshop.⁶⁰

Building repair and maintenance were the focus during the 1980s and 1990s. In the early 1980s, the station's original steel-framed windows were replaced with aluminium-framed windows. The fire station's roof was replaced again with metal in the 1990s.⁶¹

On 1 July 1990, a major reorganisation of Queensland's fire services occurred when the state's 81 local fire brigade boards were abolished and amalgamated into the Queensland Fire Service under the *Fire Service Act 1990*.⁶² By 1997, the Gympie station employed seven permanent staff and 10 auxiliary staff.⁶³

Minor alterations and changes to room uses occurred in the 21st century. In the 2000s, asbestos was removed from the building, including floor coverings in the second-floor tower room. By 2004, a small brick toilet extension was made to the rear of the 1940 WC. Circa 2005, the recreation room was converted to four small staff 'recline' (rest) rooms through the addition of lightweight partitions and suspended ceilings. In 2009, the ground floor of the tower still served as the control room; the first floor housed a museum display and the second floor contained electrical communications equipment.⁶⁴ Although not used as a family residence after c1999, the first-floor Superintendent's residence maintained its original layout.⁶⁵ Sometime after 2009, the porch gates and alarm bell plaque at the Nelson Road entrance were removed. Between 2012 and 2014, a room was constructed to the rear of the 1972 appliance bay, which in 2026 was used as a breathing apparatus room. This replaced an earlier lean-to workshop used for the same purpose. Between 2017-18, black security fencing was installed along Bligh Street and Nelson Road, due to a vehicle break-in.⁶⁶

The centenary of the Gympie Fire Brigade in 2000 and the 75th anniversary of the Gympie Fire Station building in 2015 were celebrated at the fire station, while Gympie Fire Brigade's 125th anniversary was commemorated with an open day at the fire station in 2025.⁶⁷

Due to the Gympie district's changing need for the fire service to be located closer to the Bruce Highway, the Gympie Fire Station (former) ceased to be used, when a new fire station located beside the highway at Monkland took over its role from early July 2026.⁶⁸

In 2026, Gympie Fire Station (former) is a distinctive example of an interwar Queensland fire station, constructed during the interwar expansion of fire services in regional areas of the state. The building retains the principal characteristics of its place type (with later extensions). Its interwar Functionalist design, scale and location on Caledonian Hill make it a landmark in Gympie with a strong streetscape presence, as shown by images taken of the building since its opening.

Description

Gympie Fire Station (former) stands on a high ridge at the intersection of Nelson Road and Bligh Street, Gympie, approximately 400m to the centre of town. The building occupies the northeast corner of its generous allotment, adjacent to the intersection. The remainder of the site behind the building is largely open, used as a Drill Yard and for equipment maintenance. A cluster of modern sheds and structures, including a mobile phone tower, stand within the grounds and are not of state-level cultural heritage significance.

Features of Gympie Fire Station (former) of state-level cultural heritage significance include:

- Station Building (1940, and 1972 extensions);
- Grounds; and
- Views, to and from the place.

Station Building (1940, and 1972 extensions)

The Station Building comprises two sections: an original two-storey, brick and concrete station building with an attached four-storey tower (1940); and a one-storey, brick and concrete extension (1972) wrapping its west and south sides. The top of the tower has been enclosed with a steel and glass room (1972). Vacated in 2026, the building remains highly intact.

The building has an L-shaped plan with an open space to the rear between the wings that served as the Drill Yard. The ground floor accommodates the station's operational rooms, and the first floor accommodates the superintendent's family residence.

Small extensions (post-1972) have been attached to the building's rear, which are not of state-level cultural heritage significance.

1940 Core

The 1940 core has concrete floors, face brick external walls, and a low-pitched timber-framed roof concealed behind parapets. Designed in an interwar Functionalist style, the building has restrained decoration and a strong civic presence expressed through its massing, form, materials, and detailing. The main building comprises a series of stepped cubic forms, contrasted by a curved four-storey tower positioned asymmetrically on the building corner, close to the intersection. Narrow cantilevered concrete awnings shelter horizontal strip windows. Decorative rendered detailing of the exterior is limited to the tower and the appliance-bay door surrounds, emphasising these key elements. The original timber flagpole formerly attached to the tower has been removed.

The principal elevation faces north to Bligh Street and features two large appliance-bay doors. The long Nelson Road elevation has the main pedestrian entrance, accessed through a recessed Vestibule. The rear (south) elevation has a secondary entrance into the Board Room via an external stair.

The interior retains its original layout across all levels with minimal alteration, and the interwar function of the place, including the interconnected relationship between the station and the superintendent's residence, remains highly legible.

The ground floor accommodates a large, two-engine Appliance Bay fronting Bligh Street, Watch Room, communal men's Ablutions and Dormitory, former Recreation Room (partitioned c2005 to form four staff recline rooms), and Board Room. Corridor corners are rounded to facilitate rapid movement to the appliance bay. The original WC has been converted to a store cupboard, its window blocked up, and a small, one-storey, face brick extension

accommodating female toilets has been added immediately to the south (by 2004). The doorway into the original Bathroom has been blocked up and a new one made adjacent, but the original architraves survive in the hallway. In 2026, there is a blocked-up doorway between the Dormitory and Appliance Bay with what appears to be original architraves retained on the wall. In the 1939 plan drawing, this was a fanlight only and it is not clear what was originally built or if the door was a later addition. Further investigation may reveal what the original 1940 condition was, which is of state-level cultural heritage significance.

Accessed via a stairwell from the entrance Vestibule, the first floor accommodates a modest, two-bedroom residence including Lounge, Breakfast Room, Hallway, Bathroom, WC, rear Kitchen, and an external rear stair down to the Drill Yard. It has a Side Verandah on its eastern side off its living rooms that has been enclosed later, and a Western Verandah off the bedrooms that was always enclosed. A separate internal stair leads down from the residence kitchen to a Laundry room part way between ground and first floors. Early fire bells are mounted on the residence Hallway wall above the Lounge door.

Above the residence, the tower's third level accommodates a round 'Tower Room' with narrow horizontal slit windows facing northeast. A narrow timber stair rises within the room to the Lookout, originally an open observation deck.

1972 Extensions

The 1972 extensions comprise two parts: a single-storey, ground floor extension attached to the western side of the 1940 building accommodating a large Appliance Bay, Office, and Staffroom; and a one-storey, steel and glass room enclosing the 1940 tower Lookout. They have been designed to be sympathetic to the 1940 core.

The ground floor extension has a concrete floor, face brick walls, and a shallow-pitched roof. Fronting Bligh Street, the extension has a large garage roller door into its Appliance Bay. This is adjacent to the smaller 1940 Appliance Bay doors, illustrating the evolution of the engine sizes over this time. Internally, the 1972 Appliance Bay is accessed from the 1940 Appliance Bay through an altered 1940 window, as well as from a short, angled hallway toward the rear. Behind the Appliance Bay is a small room, originally an Office, that has later been sealed up and converted to a Breathing Apparatus storeroom. The 1972 extension wraps around the rear of the 1940 Appliance Bay to accommodate a large staffroom with doors and windows out to the rear yard.

The 1972 Lookout enclosure comprises a steel-framed cabin with a continuous band of fixed and sliding windows providing panoramic views over the Gympie landscape. Enclosing the tower's top, it is the tallest feature of the place and contributes to the place's aesthetic significance.

Features of the Station Building (1940, and 1972 extensions) of state-level cultural heritage significance include:

1940 Core

- original concrete floors, structural frames, and stairs, face brick walls and parapets, timber roof frames, concrete windowsills and mullions (possibly rendered brick), concrete window awnings (and evidence of removed awnings on tower), decorative render treatments on tower, and around Bligh Street windows and appliance bay doors, and evidence of removed original timber flagpole on tower;
- 'GYMPIE FIRE STATION' sign, and its metal frame mount and large globe lights;

- entrance vestibule on Nelson Road: external concrete stair and floor, face brick and render walls, flat concrete ceiling, and evidence of removed metal gates (metal pins in walls) and wall plaque (damage to wall and hole for bell connection);
- concrete and brick external stair on southern elevation into Board Room;
- timber rear stair from Drill Yard to Laundry landing;
- concrete external Laundry landing and its concrete stair to residence back door and brick balustrade;
- original layout, spatial relationships, materials, details and features that reflect the interwar operation of the fire station and its integration with the superintendent's residence;
- original internal partitions (masonry and lightweight), including: plaster linings; rounded wall corners; coved floor to wall corners; scribed skirting lines; and ventilation grilles;
- original steel-framed internal window in wall between Main Bedroom and Western Verandah of residence;
- original flat concrete and decorative plaster ceilings and decorative plaster cornices;
- original timber joinery, including: architraves (including original architraves that remain around blocked-up doors), skirting boards, and picture rails; clear-finished moulded timber main staircase and understairs storeroom and small cupboard door (ground to first floor section is likely c1890, removed from Gympie Town Hall and incorporated here in 1940, and the first to second floor section is 1940, discernible through changes in details); narrow timber stair from second floor Tower Room to Lookout and its board lined walls and storeroom and cupboard door; timber-framed windows (residence Kitchen, and possibly retained between 1940 and 1972 appliance bays) and their original glazing; doors and their original hinges, handles, and leaded glass panels; built-in cupboards, pantry, and wardrobes, including original doors, shelves, hanging rails, hinges, and handles;
- early wall-mounted alarm bells in residence hallway; and
- early glass hanging light shades in residence;

1972 Extensions

- ground-floor extension, including: original concrete floors, face brick walls and parapet, render interior wall linings, and low-pitched roof; original layout of Appliance Bay, Office, and Staffroom, including short, angled rear Hallway between 1940 and 1972 appliance bays; original timber architraves and skirtings, and flat sheet ceilings and plaster cornices; original Appliance Bay vehicle inspection pit and large roller door; original aluminium-framed sliding and fixed window into 1972 Appliance Bay and Staffroom; original timber-framed fixed windows between Hallway and Staffroom and 1940 Appliance Bay and Staffroom; original flat faced doors into Staffroom and their glazed panels; and evidence of original former window and door openings later blocked up in Office; and
- Lookout enclosure, including steel-framed cabin with exposed round steel columns, low-pitched roof and its ribbed metal clad fascia, and metal-framed fixed and sliding windows.

Features of the Station Building (1940, and 1972 extensions) not of state-level cultural heritage significance include:

1940 Core

- non-original external paint colour scheme over concrete/render features; non-original enclosure of eastern verandah; non-original windows, doors (including Appliance Bay doors), and screen doors; non-original steel flagpole mounted to tower; non-original roof cladding (original was super-six sheets); non-original metal slat window awnings to front; non-original (c1948) timber-framed window awnings to west and south faces of first floor; non-original floor and stair coverings; non-original shelves in former ground-floor WC; fabric inserted c2005 to convert former ground-floor Recreation

Room into recline rooms, including partitions, floor coverings, suspended ceilings, services, etc; non-original bathroom and kitchen fitouts, including fixtures, cabinetry, and surfaces; non-original lean-to roof and shield wall over rear Laundry landing; non-original rear timber stair handrail; brick, single-storey toilets extension (by 2004) south of ground-floor WC; and all services, including lights (except previously mentioned lights), plumbing, air conditioners, electrical cables, and associated services fixings;

1972 Extensions

- roof sheets and roof vents; non-original blocking-up of Office windows and door; all cabinetry in Staffroom; steel shelter (c1999) south of Staffroom and its concrete slab and garden beds; render lean-to extension (c2009) south of Office; all services, including lights, plumbing, AV equipment, air conditioners and ventilation ducts, electrical cables, and associated services fixings.

Grounds

Originally, the fire station reserve was a long, narrow allotment stretching along Nelson Road with the building on the corner occupying most of the land, and a shed at the southern end, with only a small open area behind the appliance bay. The land has been expanded westwards (1959), doubling its size and providing a large open area to the south and west of the Station Building.

Standing in the southern end of the Grounds is a cluster of sheds and garages (later replacements of original sheds and workshops here), and standing west of the station building is a tall mobile phone tower. None are of state-level cultural heritage significance.

Features of the Grounds of state-level cultural heritage significance include:

- unobstructed, paved area in front of the appliance bays (1940 and 1972), continuous with Bligh Street;
- lawn areas at the base of the Station Building, continuous with the grassed nature strip;
- former Drill Yard area to the rear of the Station Building, comprising lawn areas for maintaining equipment.

Features of the Grounds not of state-level cultural heritage significance include:

- all fences, driveways, parking and equipment pads, sheds, garages, other structures, services, and vegetation (including at the base of the Station Building on the street-facing elevations, which were originally only lawn).

Views

Gympie Fire Station (former) has significant views to and from the place that are important to the place's aesthetic significance, and in demonstrating its original function.

Due to its location on a high ridge at a broad road intersection, the former station building is a prominent landmark visible from many locations around Gympie and within its otherwise low-scale neighbourhood.

The building also has views out to the surrounding townscape, particularly to Gympie's CBD, that illustrate its original, crucial fire watch function.

Views of state-level cultural heritage significance include:

- views to the station building from the surrounding townscape and from the immediate road reserves of Nelson Road and Bligh Street. These views are of the building's

street-facing facades and tower, uninterrupted by structures, street furniture, or vegetation near the building; and

- views from the station building's third floor tower Lookout. These 360-degree views are of the surrounding townscape. Originally an open deck, the views remain uninterrupted by the 1972 steel and glass enclosure.

Images



Figure 3: Gympie Fire Station (former) from the intersection of Nelson Road and Bligh Street (Queensland Government, 2026)



Figure 4: Gympie Fire Station (former) from Bligh Street with 1972 Appliance Bay at right (Queensland Government, 2026)



Figure 5: Watch Room, ground floor (Queensland Government, 2026)



Figure 6: 1940 Appliance Bay (Queensland Government, 2026)



Figure 7: Dormitory (Queensland Government, 2026)



Figure 8: Board Room (Queensland Government, 2026)



Figure 9: 1972 Appliance Bay (Queensland Government, 2026)



Figure 10: 1972 Staffroom (Queensland Government, 2026)

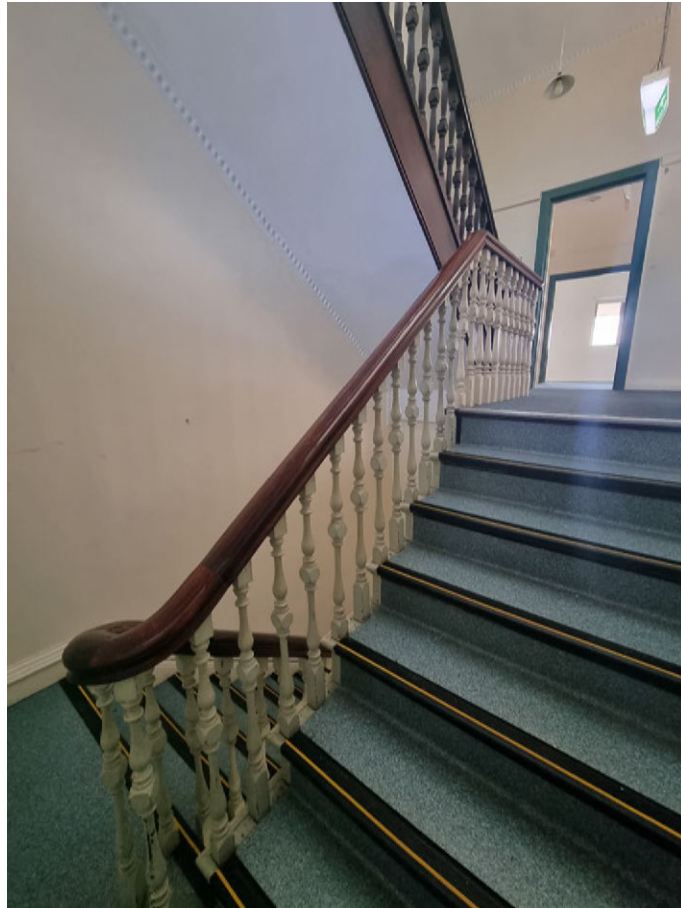


Figure 11: Main stair up to Superintendent's Residence (Queensland Government, 2026)



Figure 12: Superintendent's Residence Lounge (Queensland Government, 2026)



Figure 13: Main Bedroom looking north with Western Verandah at left (Queensland Government, 2026)



Figure 14: Stair up to second-floor Tower Room (Queensland Government, 2026)



Figure 15: Second-floor Tower Room (Queensland Government, 2026)



Figure 16: Third-floor Lookout looking northeast (Queensland Government, 2026)

Site Plan

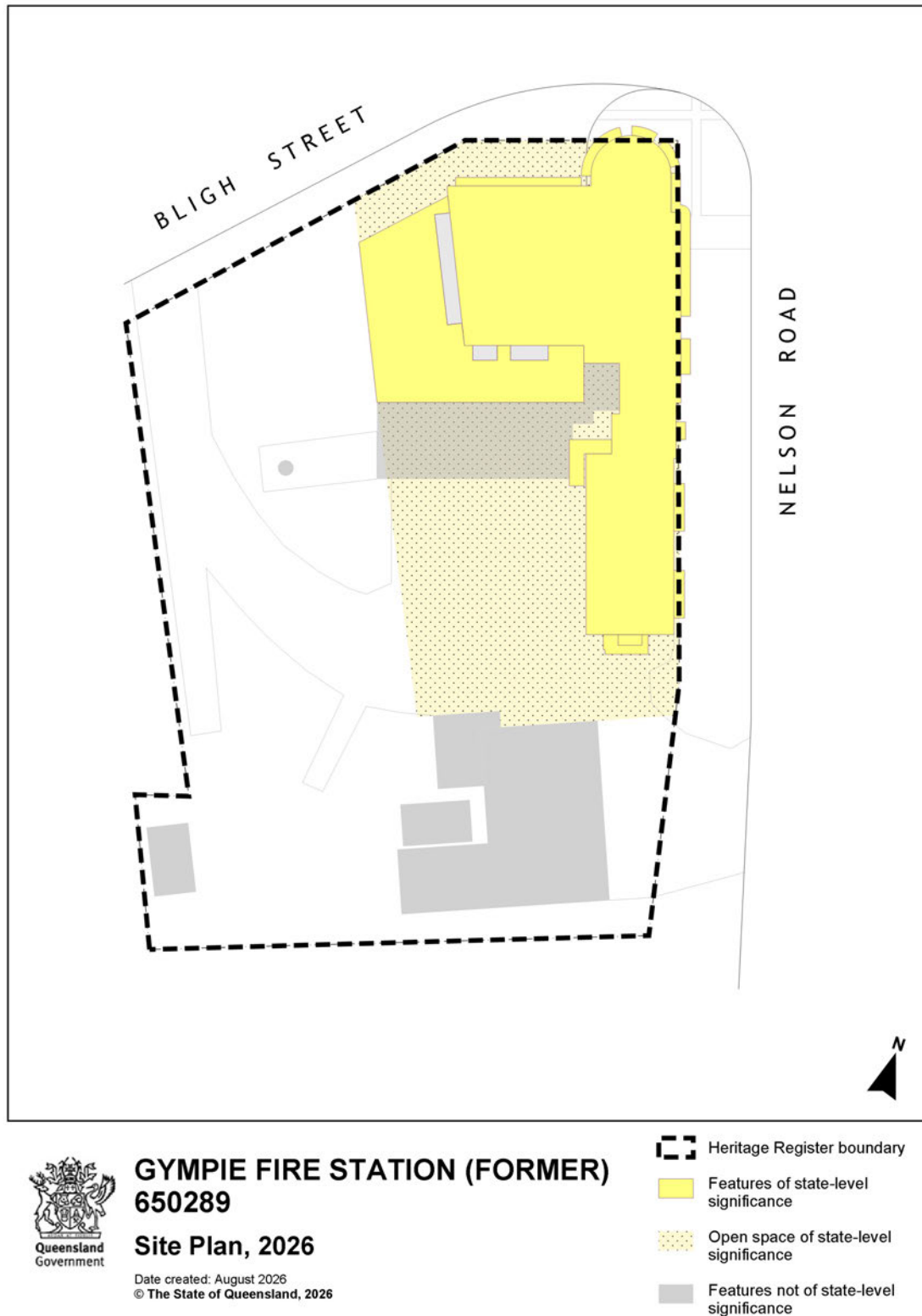
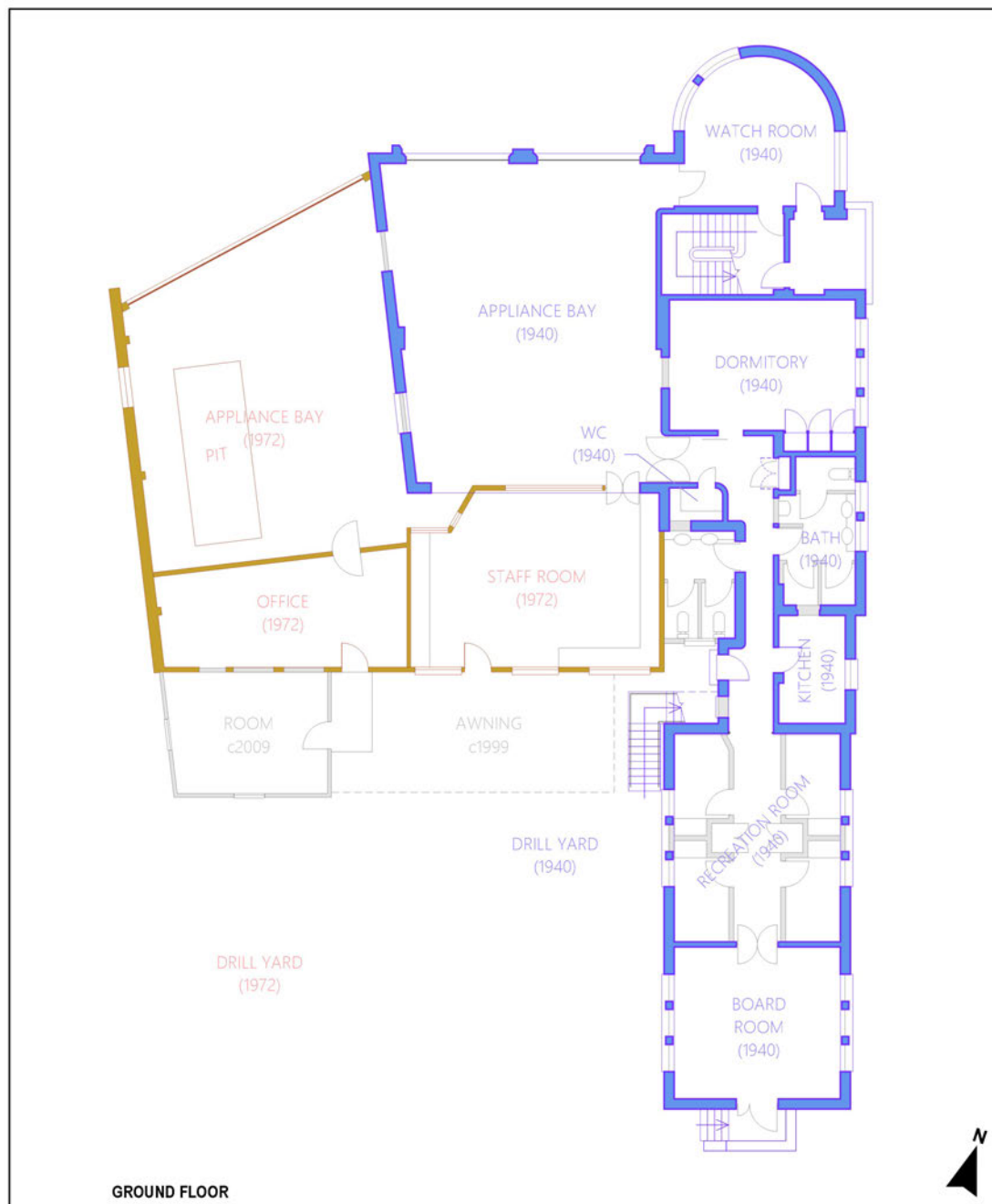


Figure 17: Site Plan (Queensland Government, 2026)

Plans



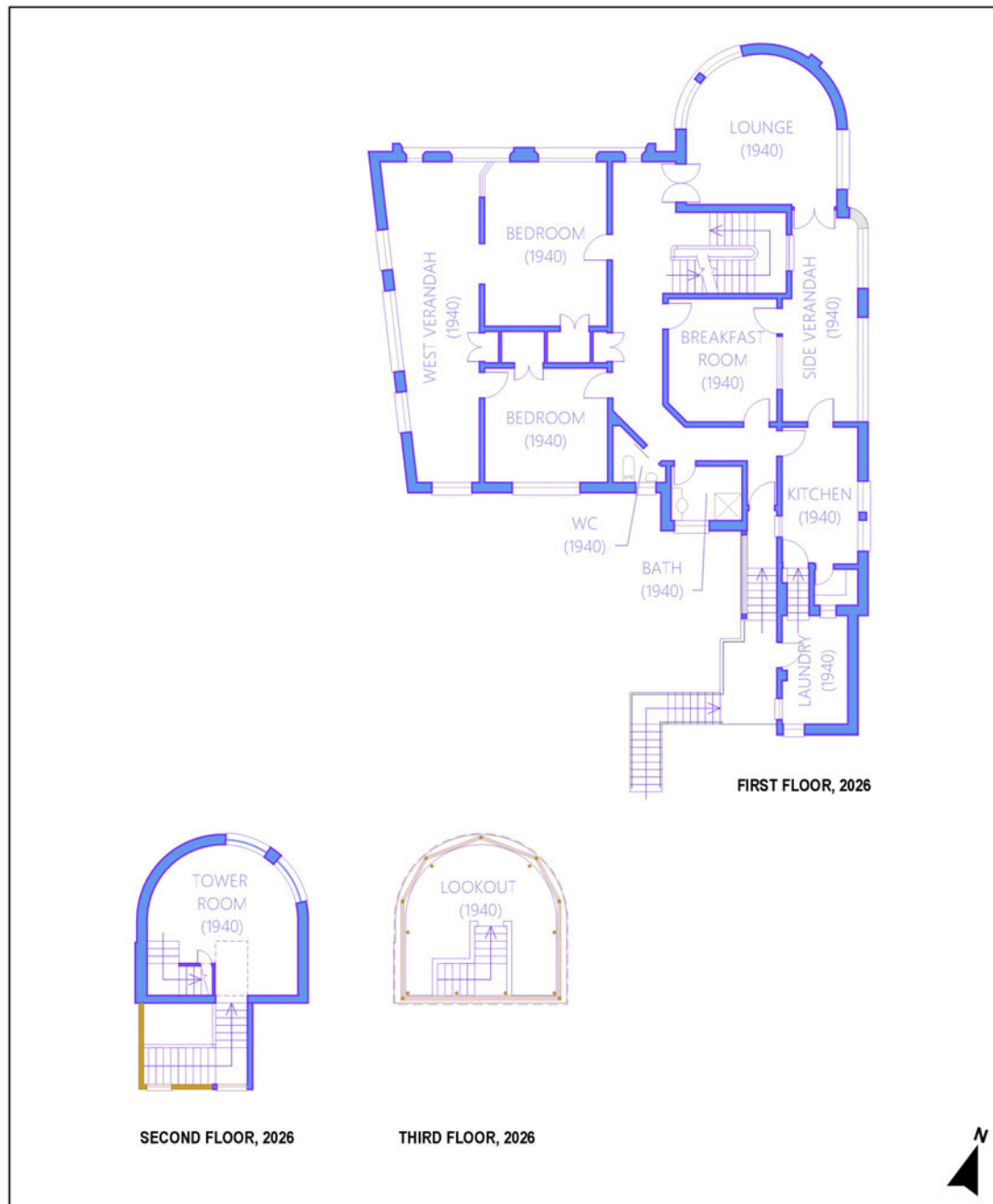
GYMPIE FIRE STATION (FORMER) 650289

Floor Plans

Date created: August 2026
© The State of Queensland, 2026

- Features of state-level significance (1940)
- Features of state-level significance (1972)
- Features not of state-level significance

Figure 18: Floor Plans (Queensland Government, 2026)



GYMPIE FIRE STATION (FORMER) 650289

Floor Plans

Date created: August 2026
© The State of Queensland, 2026

- Features of state-level significance (1940)
- Features of state-level significance (1972)
- Features not of state-level significance

Figure 19: Floor Plans (Queensland Government, 2026)

Proposed heritage register boundary

The proposed heritage boundary encompasses all of Lot 109 MCH2680.

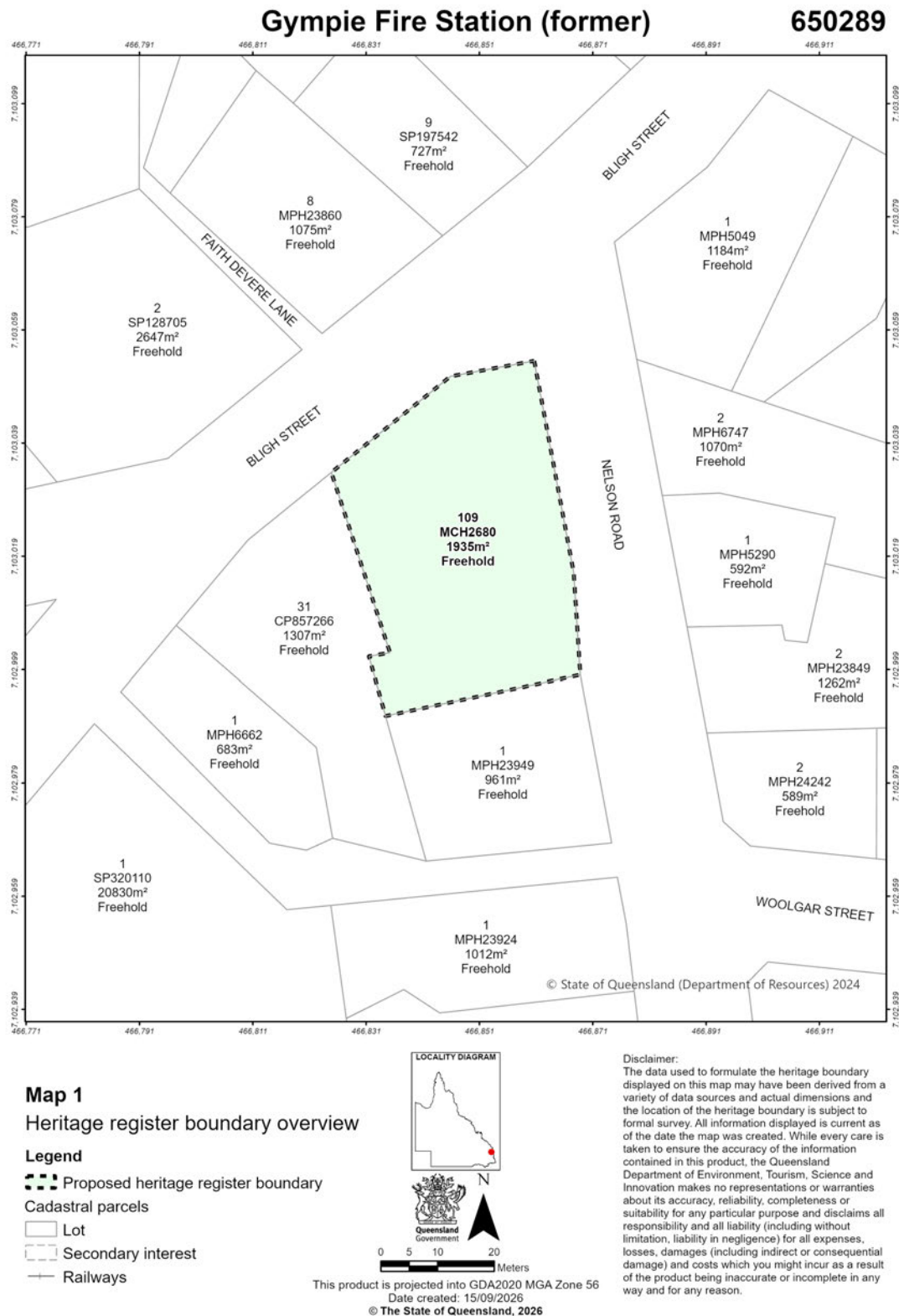


Figure 20: Proposed heritage register boundary (Queensland Government, 2026)

References

- ¹ DATSIP, Cultural Heritage Database and Register, <<https://www.culturalheritage.qld.gov.au/achris/public/public-registry/home>>, accessed 30 Jun 2026; Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation, <<https://www.kkpac.org.au/kabi-kabi-country>>, accessed 7 Jul 2026; 'Kabi Kabi Country', Kabi Kabi Aboriginal Peoples Corporation, <<https://www.kkpac.org.au/kabi-kabi-country>>, accessed 7 Jul 2026.
- ² Queensland Heritage Register 602540 'Railway Hotel'; QHR 602778 'Gympie Court and Lands Office (former)'; Hilary J Davies, 'Wide Bay Thematic History – Context Study', Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, 2007.
- ³ QHR 602778 'Gympie Court and Lands Office (former)'.
- ⁴ 'Fires, Mary Street', Local History Collection, Gympie Library.
- ⁵ *Fire Brigades Act 1876* (rep 1881 45 Vic No. 10 s 1). This legislation 'framed wholly and solely for the accommodation of Brisbane would, it was hoped, be instrumental in promoting the formation of such associations in other towns' ('no title', *Maryborough Chronicle & Wide Bay General Advertiser*, 14 Dec 1876, p.2.)
- ⁶ KD Calthorpe and K Capell, *Brisbane on Fire*, Moorooka, Ken Cappell, 1997, pp.159, 160, 222, 229-231; KD Calthorpe and K Kapell, 'Brisbane Ablaze', Brisbane, Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority, 2001, pp.2-7, QHR 602548 'Redcliffe Fire Station'; *Fire Brigades Act 1920*; 'The history of the Ipswich Fire Brigade', *Afterburners, The Quarterly Newsletter of the Retired Firefighters Association of Queensland Incorporated*, Issue 9, Oct 2000; Section 14, *Fire Brigades Act 1920* (10 Geo.V. No23.) (repealed).
- ⁷ 'The Banquet', *Gympie Times*, 10 Feb 1877, p.3.
- ⁸ 'Orders of the day', *Gympie Times*, 22 Jul 1882, p.3.
- ⁹ 'Gympie Municipal Council', *Gympie Miner and One-mile and Monkland Advertiser*, 21 Jun 1884, p.2.
- ¹⁰ Applicant, Application to enter Gympie Fire Station in the Queensland Heritage Register (Application), p.4.
- ¹¹ 'Well and truly built', *Gympie Times*, 27 Aug 1940, no page number recorded. (Local History Collection, Gympie Library); *Fire Brigades Act 1920*, *Queensland Government Gazette* (QGG), 22 Dec 1900, p.1765. (gazettal of The Gympie Fire Volunteer Brigade under *The Fire Brigade's Act 1881*).
- ¹² 'Gympie Fire Fighters', *Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette*, 25 Sep 1902, p.3; Department of Lands, survey plan MCH2028, 3 Mar 1939. 'Fire service celebrates centenary', *Gympie Times*, 8 Nov 2000 (Local History Collection, Gympie Library, no page number) (1904 picture of first fire station); '£5600 fire station', *Gympie Times*, 1 Jun 1939, no page number recorded. (Museum collection, Gympie Fire Station, 2009).
- ¹³ 'Gympie Fire Fighters', *Gympie Times*, 25 Sep 1902, p.3; 'The Gympie Fire Brigade Station', *Gympie Times*, 21 Jun 1904, p.10 (illustration). 'History a hot topic for Gympie Fireys', *Gympie Times*, 27 Sep 2003 (Local History Collection, Gympie Library, no page number) (first fire station extended over time). Gympie's firemen used a hand-pulled hose reel to 1908; after which a horse-drawn reel was used until the brigade was mechanized in 1924 with two Model T Ford-Hale fire engines. Blarney pulled the reel to 1914, and Shamrock until 1924. Two new Ford fire engines were acquired in the 1930s 'Gympie's Golden Heritage', *The Weekly Observer*, 26 Mar 1997 (Local History Collection, Gympie Library, no page number) (1930s Ford fire trucks); 'Gympie Fire Brigade' (Local History Collection, Gympie Library, no source, date) (first fire station's horses and equipment into 1920s).
- ¹⁴ 'Gympie Fire Brigade Station and Staff' image, *Gympie Times*, 18 Dec 1937, p.27; 'New brick fire station', *Gympie Truth*, 31 May 1939, no page number recorded (Museum collection, Gympie Fire Station, 2009) (steel bell tower to be retained).
- ¹⁵ 'Near and far', *Daily Mercury*, 6 Dec 1938, p.4.; 'Loan for Gympie', *Courier Mail*, 15 Sep 1939, p.6; 'Qld State Insurance Office has £6 Million Assets', *Telegraph*, 16 Nov 1939, p.12.
- ¹⁶ *Queensland Hansard*, 'Supply Debate: Fire Brigades', 20 Oct 1938, p.1134.
- ¹⁷ Gympie Fire Brigade Board, meeting minutes, 15 Dec 1938. The Board's Chairman was JA Cullinane, and its other members were JW Hughes, LJ Thomas, George Thomas, SA Fisher, PH Bundesen and DD Woodrow. At this time, the Fire Brigade's Superintendent was Walter J Smith, who had replaced the first Superintendent, Frank Frame, in 1911. ('Fire Station plans', no newspaper name, 9 Mar 1939, (Gympie library local history collection).)

¹⁸ Donald Watson and Judith McKay, *Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*, UQ Press, St Lucia, 1984, p.94; The birth of Charles Herbert Griffin during the first quarter of 1880, was registered at Kensington (Jan-Mar quarter 1880 at Kensington, Vol 01A, page 95, Mother's maiden name: Cody, GRO UK, <gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp#Results>, accessed 14 Jul 2026); Queensland Death Register, Ref: 1961/B/48273; Griffin was removed from the Register of Qld architects on 31 December 1953 (Register of Queensland Architects).

¹⁹ *Courier-Mail*: 'Building and Real Estate', 20 Nov 1934, p.23; 'Timber Merchant has Faith in the Goods He Sells', 29 Sep 1936, p.18; 'An English Home Style', 27 Oct 1936, p.18; 'Home, Building & Real Estate', 31 Aug 1937, p.18; 'Home, Building & Real Estate', 7 Sep 1937, p.18; 'Home for use-not ornament', 12 Jul 1938, p.7; *Sunday Mail*: 'The Home', 21 Oct 1934, p.16; 'The Home-An Imposing Brick Residence at Paddington', 13 Jan 1935, p.8; 'A Charming Ascot Residence', 31 Mar 1935, p.16; 'An Attractive Seaside Home', 21 Aug 1938, p.16; 'Modern Spirit in New Home' 30 Jul 1939, p.14; 'Windows a feature of new Chelmer home', 24 Mar 1940, p.8; Griffin's Gympie projects in the late 1930s were: Gympie Hospital additions, 1935; Gympie's Albert Park Grandstand, 1936; Doctor's Residence, Gympie Hospital, 1938; Gympie Town Hall extension, 1938 (T Blake, M Kennedy, and M Pullar, in association with Robert Riddell Architect, 'Queensland Health Heritage Survey, Volume 1', for Queensland Health, Oct 1996, p.85; *The Queenslander Illustrated Weekly*, 11 Feb 1937, p.30 (photograph of the 'just completed' doctor's residence at Gympie General Hospital); 'Tenders closed', *Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland (A&BJ of Qld)*, 1 Aug 1936, p.24; 'Tenders- Closed', *A&BJ of Qld*, p.19 for Gympie Hospital additions; 'Not unfair burden. Government's hospital policy. New Gympie ward opened', *Queensland Times*, 3 Jul 1937, p.7; Queensland Heritage Register (QHR) 602789 'Gympie Town Hall Reserve Complex'.)

²⁰ Gympie Fire Brigade Board, meeting minutes, 12 Jan 1939.

²¹ 'New brick fire station', *Gympie Truth*, 31 May 1939, no page number recorded (Museum collection, Gympie Fire Station, 2009); '£5600 Fire Station' *Gympie Times*, 1 Jun 1939, no page number recorded (Museum collection, Gympie Fire Station, 2009).

²² Gympie Fire Brigade Board meeting minutes 12 Jan 1939.

²³ Oral history reports that the staircase was loaded on a ute and transported to site, 'requiring helpers to walk beside the vehicle to steady the staircase'. Greg Albury, *pers. comm.* to applicant, 2026 cited in Application, p.6.

²⁴ 'Gympie's Golden Heritage', *The Weekly Observer*, 26 Mar 1997 (Local History Collection, Gympie Library, no page number) (first fire station moved to Stewart Terrace in 1940.) The 1902 fire station was sold to builder D M Kay for £70 for removal. (Gympie Fire Brigade Board meeting minutes 21 Sep 1939.) In 2026, the 1902 fire station survives at 4 Stewart Terrace, altered and converted to flats.

²⁵ 'Fire Station plans', no newspaper name recorded, 9 Mar 1939, no page number recorded. (Local History Collection, Gympie Library); 'Well and truly built', *Gympie Times*, 27 Aug 1940, (Local History Collection, Gympie Library, no page number) (Frank Frame as Superintendent until 1911).

²⁶ 'Fire Station plans', no newspaper name recorded, 9 Mar 1939, no page number recorded. (Local History Collection, Gympie Library); Information provided during site visit to Gympie Fire Station, *pers. comm.*, 17 Jun 2009. The temporary fire station building constructed in 1939, which accommodated one fire truck, was demolished c1979. (Prangley & Crofts architects' 1979 plans for current garage, Gympie Mining and Historical Museum archive; QImagery aerals: FilmQAP3538, Frame395, Run3 (5 Oct 1978) and FilmQAP4527, Frame248, Run61 (1 April 1986), <<https://qimagery.information.qld.gov.au/>>, accessed 25 Aug 2026.)

²⁷ 'New brick fire station', *Gympie Truth*, 31 May 1939, no page number recorded (Museum collection, Gympie Fire Station, 2009).

²⁸ 'New brick fire station', *Gympie Truth*, 31 May 1939, no page number recorded (Museum collection, Gympie Fire Station, 2009).

²⁹ 'Using a standard glossary: fabric, construction and style'. Internal document, Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, c2007, p.75.

³⁰ QHR 601552 'Masel Residence (former)'; R Apperly, R Irving, and P Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and terms from 1788 to the present*. North Ryde NSW, Angus and Robertson, 1989, pp.184-187.

³¹ Gympie Fire Brigade Board, special meeting minutes 16 Nov 1939.

³² *The Fire Brigades Acts 1920 to 1931*.

³³ 1920s: Hamilton-Ascot, 1920 (extant); Rockhampton (Fitzroy St), 1923 (demolished); Sandgate, 1924 (demolished); Sherwood (Corinda), 1925 (building moved to Darra in 1930 for reuse as a fire station) (location not known); Townsville, 1926 (demolished); Albion, 1927 (extant); Balmoral, 1927 (extant); Barcaldine, 1927 (extant); South Brisbane, 1927 (demolished); two further fire stations were established in converted shire council chambers buildings (Enoggera and the 2nd Sherwood, both

1928) (location not known). 1930s: Darra, 1930 (location not known, reuse of earlier Sherwood building); North Rockhampton (Berserker), 1933 (extant); Cairns, 1933 (demolished); Yeronga, 1934 (extant); Warwick, 1934 (extant); Dalby, 1935 (extant); Coorparoo, 1935 (extant); Nundah, 1936 (extant); Innisfail, 1937 (extant); Winton, c1937 (extant); Wynnum, 1938 (extant); Sarina, 1938 (demolished); Mackay, 1938 (demolished); Charleville, 1938 (extant); Bundaberg, 1938 (demolished); Southport, 1939 (demolished); Mareeba, 1939 (extant). 1940s: Gympie, 1940 (extant); Hamilton, 1941 (demolished); Lowood, 1942 (location not known); Esk, 1943 (location not known); Toogoolawah, 1944 (location not known); Tully, 1944 (extant); Surfers Paradise, 1946 (demolished); Ayr, 1947 (extant); Yeppoon, 1948 (extant); Mount Morgan, 1949 (extant). The Darra fire station, which was relocated from Sherwood during 1930, has not been included in these figures.

³⁴ Heritage Unit, DETSI, *Interwar Fire Stations Queensland Comparative Study*, unpublished, 2026.

³⁵ Heritage Unit, DETSI, *Interwar Fire Stations Queensland Comparative Study*, unpublished, 2026; No masonry stations were constructed in Queensland during WWII after Gympie (1940) until Ayr (1947), after which time they were frequently constructed.

³⁶ Such as stations at Ascot, closed in 1927, and Fortitude Valley, closed in 1928 ('Ascot Fire Station (former)', <heritage.brisbane.qld.gov.au/heritage-places/153>, accessed 8 Sep 2026; 'Fire Station Residence (former)', Brisbane City Council Heritage Register, <heritage.brisbane.qld.gov.au/heritage-places/1244>, accessed 8 Sep 2026.)

³⁷ Larger fire stations, such as Rockhampton's Central Fire Station (1883), North Brisbane (1890), or South Brisbane (1892), included separate single and married men's quarters, mess halls, sitting rooms, social halls and activity rooms, separate workrooms for the superintendent and firemen on duty, stables, harness rooms, paddocks, and storage for feed, tack, and horse equipment maintenance, and separate, adjacent houses for a superintendent or chief; *Telegraph*, 'New Fire Station', 19 October 1892, p.2; 'Rockhampton Fire Brigade', *Capricornian*, 19 May 1883, p.15; 'Fire Brigade Demonstration', *Morning Bulletin*, 10 Nov 1883, p.2; 'The Well-Known Fire Brigade Horse "Blarney," of Gympie', *Brisbane Courier*, 6 Mar 1915, p.12.

³⁸ Heritage Unit, DETSI, *Interwar Fire Stations Queensland Comparative Study*, unpublished, 2026.

³⁹ Telephones were being used at the Maryborough Fire Station (1888) from at least 1904 ('Fire Brigade Board', *The Colonist*, 23 April 1904, p.26). Usually, a watchtower was freestanding, but a few stations incorporated them into the building itself. Drill towers were tall staircase structures that replicated mid-rise fire escapes. Hose-drying towers are known to have been built at Queensland stations from the 1880s. Hoses were made of natural materials such as leather, canvas, and rubber, which needed to be hung to dry completely after use or they would rot. From the 1960s, synthetic hoses were being used, which did not require the same level of drying, and rendered the hose-drying towers unnecessary. By the mid-1970s, watchtowers had involved into more complicated structures that could incorporate smoke and breathing apparatus training.

⁴⁰ Heritage Unit, DETSI, *Interwar Fire Stations Queensland Comparative Study*, unpublished, 2026.

⁴¹ Notably, no fire stations were built in Brisbane between 1941 and 1954. (QHR 602548, 'Redcliffe Fire Station'). However, the regional centres of Esk and Tully did gain fire stations during WWII, while a slew of new stations were erected in regional Queensland in the immediate post-war period.

Heritage Unit, DETSI, *Interwar Fire Stations Queensland Comparative Study*, unpublished, 2026.

⁴² 'Well and truly built', *Gympie Times*, 27 Aug 1940, (Local History Collection, Gympie Library, no page number). 'Gympie Fire Station', National Trust of Queensland citation, Cool 1-36. According to Kay's descendants, the outbreak of war and the resultant shortage of building materials, led to the builder's bankruptcy. (*Pers Comm*, Terry and Diane Kay, 19 Oct 2009.)

⁴³ Plaque, Nelson Street entrance to fire station (JA Barns Secretary).

⁴⁴ 'Well and truly built', *Gympie Times*, 27 Aug 1940, no page number, (Local History Collection, Gympie Library); 'State Builds for Future', *Sunday Mail*, 25 Aug 1940, p.8.

⁴⁵ 'Build Truly. Government's Policy', *Daily Mercury*, 26 Aug 1940, p.4.

⁴⁶ The Great Depression, commencing in 1929 and extending well into the 1930s, caused a dramatic reduction of building work in Queensland and brought private building work to a standstill. Elected in June 1932, the Forgan Smith Labor Government following a campaign that advocated increased government spending to counter the effects of the Depression by providing impetus to the economy. The Queensland Government subsequently embarked on a large public works building programme designed to promote the employment of local skilled workers, the purchase of local building materials and the production of commodious, low maintenance buildings which would be a long-term asset to the state. This building programme included: government offices, schools and colleges; university buildings; court houses and police stations; hospitals and asylums; and gaols. ('Labor at the Helm', *The Worker*, 20 Jul 1932, p.8; 'Queensland Parliament', *The Northern Miner*, 17 Aug 1932, p.2; 'Public Buildings', *Daily Mercury*, 19 Oct 1933, p.7; DPW, *Report of the DPW for the Year Ended 30*

June 1934, Queensland Government Printer, Brisbane, 1934, pp.6-8; DPW, *Report of the DPW for the Year Ended 30 June 1935*, Queensland Government Printer, Brisbane, 1935, p.2; *Report of the DPW for the Year Ended 30 June 1936*, Queensland Government Printer, Brisbane, 1936, p.2; 'State will spend over £460,000: big building plans', *The Courier-Mail*, 28 Dec 1933, p.9; *Report of the DPW for the Year Ended 30 June 1939*, Queensland Government Printer, Brisbane, 1939, p.2.)

⁴⁷ 'Well and truly built', *Gympie Times*, 27 Aug 1940, no page number. (Local History Collection, Gympie Library).

⁴⁸ 'Well and truly built', *Gympie Times*, 27 Aug 1940, no page number. (Local History Collection, Gympie Library). On Friday, 5 March 1943, Gympie fire watcher, Kevin James Bennett, aged 20, fell from the observation tower during his shift. He suffered a compound fracture of the right thigh, a large laceration on the left leg above the ankle, shock and concussion. He died from his injuries the next morning. ('Gympie 'Spotter' Injured', *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnet Advertiser*, 9 Mar 1943, p.2; 'Fire spotter dies after fall', *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnet Advertiser*, 11 Mar 1943, p.2.)

⁴⁹ Extensions for larger engine bays were made to interwar stations at Dalby in 1953 (planning for the extension began in 1949), Warwick by 1972, Gympie in 1972, and Innisfail in c1983. New stations with larger bays were built to replace interwar stations at Bundaberg in 1958, Windsor (replaced Albion Station) in 1961, Barcaldine in 1963; Mareeba in 1969, Sandgate (Bracken Ridge) in 1970, Cairns in 1971, Townsville in c1972, Camp Hill (replaced Coorparoo station) in 1976, Nerang (replaced Southport station) in c1977, Mackay in 1978, Rockhampton (replaced the Fitzroy St station) in 1983, Hendra (replaced Nundah station) in 1999, Wynnum in 2004, and Charleville in 2018. South Brisbane and Yeronga interwar fire stations were decommissioned in 1971 and 1974 respectively, but not replaced.

⁵⁰ 'Toowoomba', *Brisbane Courier*, 15 Oct 1930, p.16; 'Fire Brigade Improvements', *Courier-Mail*, 1 Mar 1935, p.15; 'Official Opening New Quarters for Firemen', *Morning Bulletin*, 12 Jul 1937, Ithaca Fire Station (Queensland Heritage Register (QHR 601199); 'Fire Brigade Board', *Warwick Daily News*, 9 Mar 1948, p.2; 'Fire Station additions', *Dalby Herald*, 6 Feb 1953, p.7; Redcliffe Fire Station (QHR602548); 'Fire Station alterations for engine', *Longreach Leader*, 20 Mar 1937, p.26; 'Fire Station improvements' *Queensland Times*, 4 Aug 1944, p.2; 'New Hose Tower...', *Daily Mercury*, 12 Feb 1952, p.2; 'Fire Brigade Bd', *Fassifern Guardian*, 18 Mar 1953, p.5.

⁵¹ Gympie Fire Brigade Board, meeting minutes, 24 Apr 1946; Gympie Fire Brigade Board, meeting minutes, 1 Jul 1948 cited by applicant.

⁵² Queensland State Archives, Item 573345, 'Correspondence files, Gympie Fire Brigade Board: Buildings, 1947-1983'.

⁵³ *Report of the Gympie Fire Brigade Board for the year ended 30th June 1957*; Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development (Equipment included one Dodge fire engine, one International fire engine, a mobile tanker, a Holden panel van and one 'carter chief' trailer pump); Survey Plans Mch2028, 3 Mar 1939 (GG 1939.2.2140) and Mch2680, Oct 1959. R489 on Portion 109 (GG1959-2-2205).

⁵⁴ 'Gympie's Fire Brigade one of best in state', 8 January 1952 (Local History Collection, Gympie Library, no source). (The brigade had three engines in 1952: two 4-tonners, plus an engine with a 600-gallon tank for fighting grass fires. In addition, the brigade possessed 8,000' (2.4km) of hose, a trailer pump, a utility runabout and two extension ladders; one 35' (10.7m) and the other 38' (11.6m) long. Mrs Walters attended to the alarms and the telephone when the men were fighting fires.)

⁵⁵ 'Gympie's Fire Brigade one of best in state', 8 January 1952 (Local History Collection, Gympie Library, no source).

⁵⁶ QSA, Item 573345, 'Correspondence files, Gympie Fire Brigade Board: Buildings, 1947-1983'.

⁵⁷ QSA, Item 573345, 'Correspondence files, Gympie Fire Brigade Board: Buildings, 1947-1983'.

⁵⁸ QSA, Item 573345, 'Correspondence files, Gympie Fire Brigade Board: Buildings, 1947-1983'.

Aerial imagery shows the extension *in situ* on 2 Feb 1974. (QImagery, Film QAP2708 Frame 123 Run 2.)

⁵⁹ Information obtained from fire station staff during site visit, 17 Jun 2009; Aerial photograph, 1974 (QImagery, Film QAP2708 Frame 123 Run 2, 2 Feb 1974).

⁶⁰ Architectural drawings for garage, 1979, Gympie Gold Mining and Historical Museum archive; aerial photography of Gympie Fire Station (former), QImagery: Film QAP3538 Frame 395 Run 3, 5 Oct 1978; Film QAP4527 Frame 248 Run 61, 1 Apr 1986.

⁶¹ QSA, Item 573345, 'Correspondence files, Gympie Fire Brigade Board: Buildings, 1947-1983'; QSA Item 573346, 'Correspondence files, Gympie Fire Brigade Board: Plant and Equipment, 1958-1983'.

⁶² 'Change to Fire service', *Gympie Times*, 8 May 1992, p.7 (Local History Collection, Gympie Library); Queensland Government, *Bureau of Emergency Services, Annual Report 1990-1991*, p.5

<<https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-the-Assembly/Tabled-Papers/docs/4691t692/4691t692.pdf>>, accessed 23 Sep 2026.

⁶³ 'Gympie's Golden heritage', *The Weekly Observer*, 26 Mar 1997, no page number (Local History Collection, Gympie Library).

⁶⁴ 2009 images taken during site visit by DETSI heritage officers (DETSI database).

⁶⁵ Information obtained from fire station staff during site visit, 17 Jun 2009.

⁶⁶ Gympie Fire Station Application, p.10.

⁶⁷ 'Fire service celebrates centenary', *Gympie Times*, 8 Nov 2000; Application, p.10; 'Pole says: 125th Fire Brigade anniversary was hot', *Gympie Times* online 16 Nov 2025,

<<https://gympietoday.com.au/news/2025/11/16/pole-says-125th-fire-brigade-anniversary-was-hot/>>,
accessed 17 Sep 2026; 7NEWS Sunshine Coast, Video, 25 August 2015,

<<https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSSC/videos/the-states-oldest-operational-fire-station-turned-75-yesterdaythe-stylish-brick-/943576699033098/>>, accessed 12 April 2026.]

⁶⁸ Queensland Fire Department, *pers. comm.* 17 Jun 2009; 'Gympie The real treasure is the town', 21 Jul 2026, Facebook, <<https://www.facebook.com/GympieRealTreasure/posts/the-fire-trucks-have-left-the-building-sadly-the-spot-on-where-a-gympie-fire-sta/1482669943901199/>>, accessed 22 Jul 2026.